

Diablo Watch

Newsletter for friends and supporters of Save Mount Diablo

SPRING / SUMMER 2022 | No. 73



50 Years

Honoring the Past, Inspiring the Future

Inside » Expanding from Two Peaks to Seven Counties

Diablo Watch

SPRING / SUMMER 2022 Number 73

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Diablo Watch is published twice yearly for friends of Save Mount Diablo, a nationally accredited land trust and 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.



From the Executive Director

Edward Sortwell Clement, Jr.
 Executive Director, Save Mount Diablo

Dear Supporters,

There are many superlatives that can be used to describe what you, our supporters, have enabled Save Mount Diablo to become and accomplish over the past 50 years. Here are a few.

Resplendent

You have enabled us to be resplendent with our accomplishments.

When Save Mount Diablo was formed in 1971, Mount Diablo was home to just one 6,788-acre park, Mount Diablo State Park. Today, there are more than 50 parks and preserves around the mountain north of Altamont Pass, totaling over 120,000 conserved acres—and Mount Diablo State Park has grown to nearly 20,000 acres.

Because of Save Mount Diablo and our good partners, Mount Diablo and its foothills are one of the Bay Area's most significant assemblages of protected natural lands and wildlife habitats.

Save Mount Diablo's resplendency is growing as demonstrated by recent accomplishments like our Forever Wild Campaign and geographic expansion south to help ensure Mount Diablo does not get cut off from its sustaining Diablo Range because of things like overdevelopment and bad planning.

Relevant

You have enabled us to be relevant to our communities.

Any nonprofit that has received support from its communities for 50 years has shown its relevancy.

Save Mount Diablo's relevancy is growing as demonstrated by our growing donor base numbers. Our donor base has substantially grown every year for the last few years.

Resilient

You have enabled us to be a resilient organization.

Any nonprofit that has been able to deliver on its mission for 50 years is resilient.

Save Mount Diablo's resiliency is growing as demonstrated by our performance over the past two years of the pandemic where we have not only survived but thrived in building support for, and delivering on, our land conservation mission.

Thank you so much . . .

. . . for being an important part of our glowing and growing history!

With Gratitude,

A Special Thank You to Our Donors

By Queenie Li

THANKS TO YOU, our generous supporters, we have continued to expand our capacity and success over the years. We would not be able to accomplish all that we have, from protecting more than **120,000 acres** (*and counting!*) on and around Mount Diablo, to connecting **thousands of students** to the outdoors, without your support.

You allowed us to achieve our historic goal of **raising \$15 million** to permanently protect 1,681 acres in the East Bay through newly established **land acquisition, stewardship endowment, and legal defense funds** as part of our Forever Wild campaign.

You are the reason we have been able to hit the ground running with our commitment to **plant and protect 10,000 native** trees and plants in 10 years, as well as open **an educational preserve** that is free to the general public.

You are the reason why we have been able to expand our focus farther south to encompass the seven counties across the Diablo Range.

You have helped our community grow as well. Our mailing list has grown from 400 individuals to well over 10,000 individuals with the help of supporters spreading the word of our work. And we currently have **4,000 active donors** like you who believe in the work that we do.

So, we couldn't have done all of this without you, and we have no plans to slow down anytime soon.

Thank you! 🌿

Four Days on
Mount Diablo,
2019

PHOTOGRAPHY: SCOTT HEIN

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ON THE COVER:
Mount Diablo as seen during
Four Days Diablo.
PHOTO: SCOTT HEIN



WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

50 Years of Defending, Protecting, and Restoring Land

By **Laura Kindsvater**

SAVE MOUNT DIABLO was co-founded by Dr. Mary Bowerman, a botanist, and Art Bonwell, an electrical engineer and organizer. Mary knew every nook and cranny on Mount Diablo and what grew there; she was very interested in preserving places where there were rare plants on the mountain. She had roamed the area in the 1930s, getting permission to explore from the ranchers who owned most of the land. She developed the mountain's first flora as a PhD student of Willis Jepson's at UC Berkeley. In those days, the state park was tiny, just 631 acres.

Art Bonwell was a leader in the Bay Chapter of the Sierra Club. He brought people together, and he was known for his perseverance, outside-the-box thinking, love for teaching others, and keen interest in history. "Mary had the dream that the mountain and its foothills would be preserved. Art had the strategy," noted Robert Doyle, a founding Board member of Save Mount Diablo. "It was his idea to start acquiring land at the base of Mount Diablo."

"If you wanted to have something done, all you had to do was tell Art, 'It can't be done,' and he would get it done," remarked Laura Hoffmeister, a former Concord City Councilmember.

Mary Bowerman used her deep

knowledge of the mountain to create a list of places that must be saved. We still refer to this list today.

At first, Save Mount Diablo focused on grassroots organizing and park advocacy. We helped to guide state park acquisitions, then made our first land acquisition in 1976.

All volunteers for 17 years

Save Mount Diablo was an all-volunteer organization for 17 years. People just like you donated thousands of hours of their time (and volunteers still donate thousands of hours to our projects every year). We've become a community institution—in large part because of the community volunteers who've made that happen.

We hired our first part-time staffer, Seth Adams, in 1988. For years, there was no Save Mount Diablo office, and Seth was the only paid employee. It's amazing to see all that we were able to accomplish in those years—again, our partners, volunteers, and donors were a big key to our success.

In 2000, Ron Brown was hired as Executive Director of Save Mount Diablo. In the early 2000s, the organization had only three paid staff. Ron did an incredible job of building Save Mount Diablo's capacity during his

tenure. By the time he retired in 2015, the organization had 14 staff.

Our current Executive Director, Ted Clement, has brought more strategic planning, stability, and professionalism to Save Mount Diablo. Today we have 19 paid, permanent staff. We've expanded our advocacy work to seven counties across the northern Diablo Range (Contra Costa, Alameda, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Stanislaus, Merced, and San Benito), and our land acquisition work to Corral Hollow south of Livermore.

We've strengthened our educational programs to bridge the gap between people and nature, and we've deepened our commitment and capability for restoration and stewardship of the land (we now have three permanent stewardship staff).

More than 120,000 acres of open space in over 50 parks and preserves on and around Mount Diablo have been protected because of you, our community of volunteers and donors.

We are immensely grateful for you! With your help, we're looking forward to many more years of protecting land for people to enjoy and wildlife to thrive in, on and around Mount Diablo and across its sustaining Diablo Range. 🌿

Timeline of Major Achievements

1971 – 2022

1971 Dr. Mary Bowerman and Art Bonwell found Save Mount Diablo on December 7th at Heather Farms Garden Center in Walnut Creek.

1972 Save Mount Diablo establishes a list of conservation and acquisition priorities based on Mary's in-depth knowledge of the mountain, which is still referred to today.

1973 Donner Canyon and part of Mitchell Canyon are preserved; we push for the creation of Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, Shell Ridge Open Space, and Lime Ridge Open Space; and we support state and local bonds for acquisition.

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) begins acquiring land for Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve.

1974 Shell Ridge Open Space and the Walnut Creek Open Space system are created.

1975 Morgan Territory Regional Preserve is created with help from the Contra Costa Park Council and Save Mount Diablo founders.

1976 The 117-acre "Corner Piece," the organization's first direct land acquisition, is acquired and permanently protected.

We push for the creation of Diablo Foothills Regional Park.

First acquisition for Lime Ridge Open Space is made.

1978 Mount Diablo is designated as a State Historical Landmark.

1980 North Peak and Prospectors Gap are preserved.

1984 Soto Ranch–White Canyon, Save Mount Diablo's second purchase, is protected.

1988 Save Mount Diablo hires its first staff member, Seth Adams, now our Land Conservation Director.

Save Mount Diablo pushes for protection of Round Valley Regional Preserve. It had been threatened by a garbage landfill.

Regional Park Measure AA and a state park funding measure are both approved.

1989 Peregrine falcons are reintroduced to the Mount Diablo area—a first stewardship project.

Publication of *Diablo Watch* begins.

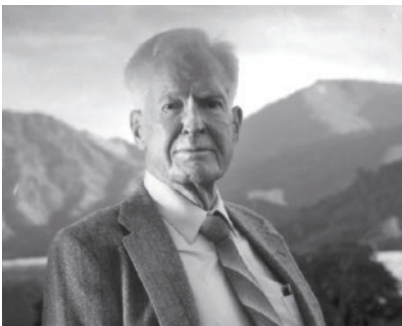
The 631-acre Morgan Ranch is protected and three Contra Costa landfill proposals are successfully fought.

1990 The first county Urban Limit Line is established.

1991 Development at Clayton Ranch and Chaparral Spring is stopped.

1992 Three Springs is protected.

A Mount Diablo to Black Diamond Mines wildlife corridor is proposed.



Art Bonwell



Mary Bowerman at the summit, 1930.



Save Mount Diablo Board members at the Sattlers' kitchen table.



Lime Ridge Open Space

1993 The 31-mile “Diablo Trail” from Walnut Creek to Brentwood is proposed.

1994 Chaparral Spring is acquired.

1995 Significant acquisitions are made at Round Valley Regional Preserve and Lime Ridge Open Space.

1996 Co-founders Arthur Bonwell and Dr. Mary Bowerman receive a Chevron-Times Mirror Magazine National Conservation Award.

1997 Vasco Caves Regional Preserve is protected.

Save Mount Diablo opposes the Pittsburg Southeast Hills annexation and Cowell Ranch and Tassajara developments.

1998 Save Mount Diablo aids EBRPD in negotiating and raising funds for acquiring the first part of Clayton Ranch.

Save Mount Diablo begins defending Roddy Ranch through its advocacy.

1999 Silva Ranch is acquired.

2000 Ron Brown is hired as Executive Director of Save Mount Diablo.

Contra Costa County’s Urban Limit Line is tightened.



Taking care of native plantings at Big Bend.

2001 Wright Canyon is protected.

2002 Altamont Pass area is included in our geographic focus.

The Los Vaqueros expansion is opposed.

2003 Morgan Red Corral and Joseph Galvin Ranch are protected.

2004 The 3,000-acre Riggs Canyon is preserved after 16 years of work.

2005 Mount Diablo buckwheat (*Eriogonum truncatum*) is rediscovered after being presumed extinct for 69 years.

We host the first Mount Diablo Challenge, a bike race up to the peak of Mount Diablo.

2007 Mangini Ranch is acquired—now open to the public as a free educational preserve.

Irish Canyon and Marsh Creek 1 are acquired.

East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy is created, a major funding effort.

2008 Marsh Creek 2 and 4 are purchased, and Marsh Creek 3 is protected with an easement.

The extension of EBRPD Measure AA is approved as Measure WW.

2009 Restoration work at Irish Canyon and Marsh Creek 4 is begun.

Viera–North Peak is purchased—165 acres making up the highest private parcel in the county.

2010 Joan Hamilton collaborates with Save Mount Diablo and Mount Diablo Interpretative Association to create Audible Mount Diablo.

Dry Creek, Oak Hill Lane, and Moss Rock are purchased.

2011 Advocacy work begins to prevent development of Doolan Canyon in Dublin.

Thomas Home Ranch is purchased.

2012 Marsh Creek 6 and more of Highland Ridge is acquired.

Marsh Creek State Historic Park is created; it includes more than 3,000 acres of Cowell Ranch that were defended by Save Mount Diablo and its partners in the 1990s.

2013 Restoration of the historic “Eye of Diablo” Mount Diablo Beacon at the summit is completed.

Save Mount Diablo funds dozens of small grants through its new Mary Bowerman Science and Research program.

We purchase 1,080-acre Curry Canyon Ranch.

East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy and EBRPD agree to purchase the Roddy Ranch, which Save Mount Diablo has defended for 15 years.

2014 Big Bend (Marsh Creek 8) and Hanson Hills (Marsh Creek 9) are protected, bringing the length of Marsh Creek that is protected up to 15 of 33 miles.

2015 Ron Brown retires, and Executive Director Ted Clement is hired.

2016 Our Conservation Collaboration Agreement program is launched to get more young people outdoors.

Save Mount Diablo wins California Nonprofit of the Year Award for Assembly District 16 and achieves national accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission.

We protect the Rideau property with a conservation easement and initiate purchase of North Peak Ranch, which will be completed in 2026.

2017 Our new, free guided public hikes series, Discover Diablo, is launched.

95-acre Anderson Ranch is acquired.

2018 The Antioch City Council adopts the Sand Creek Area protection initiative proposed by Save Mount Diablo and its partners, increasing protection for more than 1,200 acres of hills, creek, and rare wildlife habitat in south Antioch.

2019 After 14 years of advocacy work by Save Mount Diablo and its partners, Concord gets its first regional park, later named Thurgood Marshall Regional Park. Save Mount Diablo doubles its geographic focus south to the Santa Clara County line.

2020 *Bay Nature* magazine publishes an article about the Diablo Range sponsored by Save Mount Diablo and the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority.



In March 2022, we opened Mangini Ranch Educational Preserve—the first of its kind in Contra Costa County—for free, public group use.

Smith Canyon is acquired, a potential recreational gateway to Curry Canyon and the east side of Mount Diablo State Park.

Nature Heals and Inspires Zoom series is launched, attracting more than 2,500 registrants.

Diablo Range Revealed series is launched with Joan Hamilton, exploring the Diablo Range and its recovery from the 2020 wildfires.

2021 Discover Diablo program is expanded to include mountain-biking and rock-climbing events and bilingual Spanish-English hikes, increasing the total number of events per year from 24 to 36.

Save Mount Diablo passes a comprehensive organization-wide Climate Action plan that includes an initiative to plant and protect 10,000 native trees and plants in the next 10 years.

Forever Wild is completed—our \$15 million campaign, permanently protecting 1,681 acres.

Save Mount Diablo teaches its first land conservation course at CSU East Bay.

The first endangered California condor to return to Contra Costa County in over 100 years is spotted on the eastern flanks of Mount Diablo.

Governor Gavin Newsom signs AB/SB 155, permanently preserving Tesla Park and creating a new state park after more than 20 years of campaigning by Save Mount Diablo and partners.



The Antioch City Council voted in 2018 to protect more than 1,200 acres of wildlife habitat in the Sand Creek area in south Antioch and continues to support our open space initiative.

2022 The mile-wide Concord Mt. Diablo Trail Ride Association land on Mount Diablo is protected with a perpetual conservation easement.

Save Mount Diablo expands its geographic focus for advocacy work to include the seven northern counties in the Diablo Range: Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, and San Benito.

Our Board of Directors approves an official land acknowledgment.

As a result of Save Mount Diablo's advocacy, CEMEX announces that it will donate 101 acres along the Black Point Trail to Mount Diablo State Park.

Save Mount Diablo's legal challenge against the Seeno Faria development is won.



Dr. Mary Bowerman with Art Bonwell in 1993.

Diablo's First Line of Defense

By **Seth Adams**

ON ALL SIDES OF DIABLO'S MAIN PEAKS, development was creeping into the foothills. At meetings of local conservation groups like the Contra Costa Park Council, a Sierra Club regional group, and the California Native Plant Society, botanist Mary Bowerman, who was then in her mid-60s, would regularly stand and ask, "What are we going to do about Mount Diablo?" Finally Art Bonwell, the leader of the Sierra Club group, said, "Let's start an organization just to work on Mount Diablo." On December 7, 1971, Save Mount Diablo was born.

It was well timed. The long-standing Contra Costa Park Council, which had urged creation of local parks for decades, was losing steam. After losing a ballot campaign to create a county park system, with support from park council leaders like Hulet Hornbeck, Manny Lindner, and Susan Watson, in 1964 the park council helped sponsor a second effort that passed, to expand the East Bay Regional Park District east.

Martinez resident Hornbeck was hired to create a park district master plan and oversee acquisition of new parks. The East Bay Regional Park District began buying some of the Contra Costa Park Council's highest priority properties, such as Las Trampas, Black Diamond Mines, Point Pinole, and Morgan Territory.

Save Mount Diablo started in 1971 as an advocacy organization—lobbying for funds to expand Mount Diablo State Park. A number of key conser-

vationists became more active with Save Mount Diablo as the park council faded. Trips to the offices of legislators like Senator John Nejedly were common, lobbying for funds.

Not long after that first meeting, a giant development was proposed by a Florida developer who had bought the old Blackhawk Ranch along Diablo's southern Black Hills. A Blackhawk representative attended a Save Mount Diablo meeting and offered 100 acres to Mount Diablo State Park. Other activists from the area would fight the development for years. Save Mount Diablo was tiny but fearless; we focused on what parts of the ranch were most important. Ultimately two-thirds of the 6,500-acre Blackhawk Ranch would be protected.

The same two-pronged pattern would be repeated over and over. Save Mount Diablo leaders lobbied for funds to protect the highest priority or most threatened properties. And Save Mount Diablo activists worked to defend special places and stop development, or to squeeze as many acres of the most important places out of each project that was proposed.

Five years later, we gained more credibility in Sacramento by also beginning to raise private funds to acquire land. Keep in mind, though, that throughout our history, we've protected more land through advocacy than through direct acquisition.

Advocacy made sense. When we were founded, the organization—which was initially 10 to 20 individuals—could rely on activist California State Park staff members locally and in Sacramento, and on the recently enlarged East Bay Regional Park District to handle acquisition. But in the meantime, we'd have to stave off an endless stream of development

proposals. New leaders like Bob Doyle earned their stripes in those nonstop battles and many lobbying efforts.

I was hired in 1988 as the first part-time staff. The world was going digital, and development threats were intensifying, but as with the park council leaders before them, Save Mount Diablo's founders were getting older. Hiring staff infused new energy into the fight and began a rapid increase in our capacity and a rapid expansion of our geographic focus.

By 2021 we were monitoring more than 50 planning agendas weekly, looking for threats and opportunities in three different counties and many cities. In addition to individual projects, we were involved in lawsuits, initiatives, and legislation or policy efforts affecting much larger areas. Around Diablo's main peaks and north of Altamont Pass, preservation expanded from 6,788 acres to more than 120,000 acres, protecting 75 percent of what we think is important. We and our allies have tripled the protected lands in the East Bay to cover over one-third of the area.

It's 2022 and Save Mount Diablo turns 50 while once again dramatically expanding its geographic area 150 miles south down the Diablo Range, more than quadrupling the area within which it will focus its advocacy efforts. That's the northern seven of 12 Diablo Range counties, past Henry W. Coe State Park and Pacheco Pass to San Benito County and San Benito Mountain. In the 5,400-square-mile Diablo Range as a whole, just 24 percent has been protected. Your support will help us accomplish California's next great conservation story by expanding protection in the Diablo Range. 🌿

Building Community and a Better Future

By **Sean Burke and Roxana Lucero**

IN 1989, Save Mount Diablo began its first stewardship project, reintroducing peregrine falcons into Mount Diablo's Pine Canyon. Using surrogate prairie falcon parents, Save Mount Diablo staff and the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group collaborated in reintroducing eyas (young) peregrine falcons into active nests in which the prairie falcons raised the peregrines as their own.

After years of DDT bioaccumulating in prey species, falcon eggs had become so brittle that the mere act of sitting on them for incubation crushed every generation until there were only two nesting pairs in the State of California.

Save Mount Diablo joined forces with eight state and local agencies to see the Mount Diablo reintroduction project come to life. Over the course of several years of reintroduction work and monitoring, populations of peregrines successfully stabilized, and today peregrine falcons can be seen soaring overhead in the rock spires of Pine Canyon year-round.

Teamwork

With that first project, the spirit of teamwork, collaboration, and perseverance to achieve a goal for the good of the land was sewn into the fabric of Save Mount Diablo. A few years later, restoration projects including seeding bunchgrass at the entrance of Mitchell Canyon, monitoring the American badger, and moving to creek and pond restoration for native fish and amphibians followed with the same



Volunteers contributing in March to our 10,000 Trees and Plants project.

spirit of community and building a better future.

When Save Mount Diablo started to own land for longer periods of time and began to acquire conservation easements, stewardship projects became more involved and diverse. Volunteers like Save Mount Diablo's Trail Dogs gave thousands of hours of help and led to the formation of the Diablo Restoration Team (DiRT).

Restoration projects on Save Mount Diablo land ranged from integrated pest management projects and removing invasive non-native plants like artichoke thistle, to habitat restoration through native California plantings and wildlife releases. They included trail building and maintenance, infrastructure installations, creek monitoring, demolition projects, trash removal, cattle ranching and rangeland management, fence building and mending, fire abatement, and the formation of educational programs to inspire and involve the community to follow suit in becoming

good stewards. With the help of several grants, Save Mount Diablo has been able to protect and restore riparian, oak woodland, oak savanna, and chaparral habitats, on more than 11 properties.

Collaboration

Through the years, the spirit of teamwork has never waned. Presently, we work with several partners like the Lindsay Wildlife Experience, the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy, Mount Diablo State Park, the East Bay Regional Park District, CAL FIRE, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Bay Area Climbers Coalition to continue in all types of stewardship activities, including strengthening wildlife corridors through monitoring; building habitat; and releasing native species like ground squirrels, golden eagles, and American kestrels on and around the Mount Diablo area.

We help our local agencies with organizing helpful stewardship projects like the annual Pine Canyon cleanup or Coastal Cleanup Days.

Perseverance

We continue our restorative efforts, and guided by Save Mount Diablo's Climate Action Plan, we have pledged to plant or protect 10,000 trees and native plants in the coming years.

With help from our faithful volunteers, we've currently planted and protected nearly 1,200 as of March. Teamwork makes the dream work! 🌱



Growing Mount Diablo State Park

By **Floyd McCluhan**

When Mary Bowerman and Art Bonwell joined forces to save Mount Diablo from encroaching development in 1971, Mount Diablo State Park was only 6,788 acres, most of it located high up on the main peak.

TODAY, 50 YEARS AFTER Save Mount Diablo's formation, and more than 100 years after the creation of Mount Diablo State Park, the park has grown to almost 20,000 acres. Outside the state park, there are more than 50 parks and preserves on and around Mount Diablo, stretching from Walnut Creek to Brentwood and Livermore, totaling more than 100,000 acres. So how did we help triple the size of the park and become an essential partner with the park district?

Advocacy: The Start of Save Mount Diablo

It was 1971, one year after the first nationally recognized Earth Day and the creation of the California Environmental Quality Act. Up until this point, subdivisions had been creeping up on the mountain fast. The public perception at the time was that the state park encompassed the whole mountain, and that all of Mount Diablo was therefore protected. This, of course, was completely untrue.

“Nothing was taking place as far as preservation on the mountain. The State was not doing anything. We were not doing anything. And it was apparent that we weren't going to be doing anything. So that's when I got the idea that we ought to get a specialty group and see if we couldn't get something done.” ART BONWELL

Although there were two state parks in the county at that time (the other being Franks Tract State Recreation Area), there were no plans to grow the parks or add new ones. Early on, we advocated and lobbied for more funding for Mount Diablo State Park to protect more land. In fact, starting at our first meeting, members lobbied for

the passage and funds from the Park Bonds Act, and would soon advocate for other acquisition-related bonds.

Negotiation: The Blackhawk Wars

Within the first few years, we would cut our teeth in a bigger battle: The Blackhawk Wars. In 1974, one developer proposed subdivision on a massive swath of land at the base of Mount Diablo (what is now Blackhawk). At the time, it was the largest proposal for housing development in Contra Costa County.

We negotiated that 2,052 acres be dedicated to Mount Diablo State Park as a condition for development—the largest piece of private land ever deeded to the state park system at that time. The land stretches seven miles from Alamo to the Tassajara area. It expanded the park by nearly a third of its size at that time, adding gorgeous areas like Wall Point, Blackhawk Ridge, parts of Dan Cook and Jackass canyons, and the area below Oyster Point.



Mount Diablo observation platform, 1931.

On a larger scale, our involvement influenced the way developers built in the Bay Area. It set a precedent that dedicating open space would be a condition of development.

Acquisition: The Corner Piece

Although Save Mount Diablo was originally an advocacy group, it soon became apparent that advocacy could only go so far. What happened when public agencies had no funding, and important pieces of land became available to buy? Without quick action, developers could swoop in.

By 1976, we raised the funds to make our first direct acquisition, a 117-acre piece of land called the Corner Piece, located at the corner of Marsh Creek and Morgan Territory

roads. At the time, it was much more an island than a corner—it was four miles away from Mount Diablo State Park. It was a risky investment at the time, but thanks to our strong work in the years that followed, it paid off. Now, the Corner Piece is the corner of Mount Diablo State Park.

Protection in Perpetuity

We quickly became essential partners with California State Parks, and we still work in tandem. With our large public support, we've been able to raise funds to purchase lands that Mount Diablo State Park wouldn't have been able to acquire. Because the state park has accepted our lands, we've been able to put more energy toward new land preservation projects.



Governor Gray Davis with Mary Bowerman.

In 50 years, Save Mount Diablo and Mount Diablo State Park have come a long way. However, there is much work left to be done. Twenty-five percent of the ecologically important land around Mount Diablo still needs protection. Despite these challenges, we have a lot to be grateful for. The park is still growing, and millions of people treasure it and find joy there. 🌿



Mary Bowerman hike,
January 2022



Building Our Education Programs to Protect and Advocate for Nature

By **Ted Clement**

Since its founding in 1971, Save Mount Diablo has worked to educate people about the importance of protecting Mount Diablo and its associated natural areas.

SAVE MOUNT DIABLO'S education efforts are about honoring the past and inspiring the future. In the last few years, Save Mount Diablo has honored this education tradition and even greatly expanded its education efforts out of necessity due to factors such as the climate crisis; the mass species extinction event; the documented "nature deficit disorder" in our younger, wired generations; and our need to grow our donor base to expedite and perpetuate our conservation work.

We have expanded our education efforts in recent years in many ways.

- » Our Board of Directors approved adding education as a focus in our mission statement.
- » We created an Education Committee made up of great local educators to help advise us on our educational pursuits.
- » Several educators have been added to our Board of Directors.
- » We created a full-time Education & Outreach Associate position.

We have developed popular new education programs like our Discover Diablo free public outings program, through which we offer two or more outdoor education adventures per month. (*You can go to our website to see the schedule and sign up.*) Save Mount Diablo is utilizing Discover Diablo, and other education initiatives, to help diversify our organization and the communities we serve. This approach is helping us build a stronger and more resilient organization with broad-based support that provides more momentum for conservation and for addressing major issues like the climate crisis. We have added bilingual hikes, and offerings such as rock climbing and mountain biking to Discover Diablo to broaden our appeal to diverse communities.

Save Mount Diablo is working to build the bench for land conservation in our area as well as working to connect with diverse communities, so when we were asked to teach a land conservation course for the fall 2021

semester at California State University, East Bay, one of the most ethnically diverse universities in the United States, we gladly accepted. The course was entitled *History of Land Conservation Nationally and in the Mount Diablo Area, the Original and Future Stewards, and Careers in the Field*. The university liked our course, so we are teaching it again this spring semester.

Another popular education program that we have developed is our Conservation Collaboration Agreement program for local schools and sponsoring businesses. It is made up of three basic parts. First, our staff provide in-class educational presentations regarding land conservation of the Mount Diablo area to the participating students and also to the sponsoring company's employees at their office. Second, our staff teach and lead the participating students and employees in an outdoor, experiential field day at one of our conserved properties, which includes an environmental service project, a field ecology class, an interpretive nature hike, and a solo out on the land where each participant does a contemplative journal writing exercise about nature. Finally, in an act of educational and participatory philanthropy, the business will provide Save Mount Diablo memberships for all of its employees, while the students will raise funds so that they can become members of Save Mount Diablo through our youth membership program.

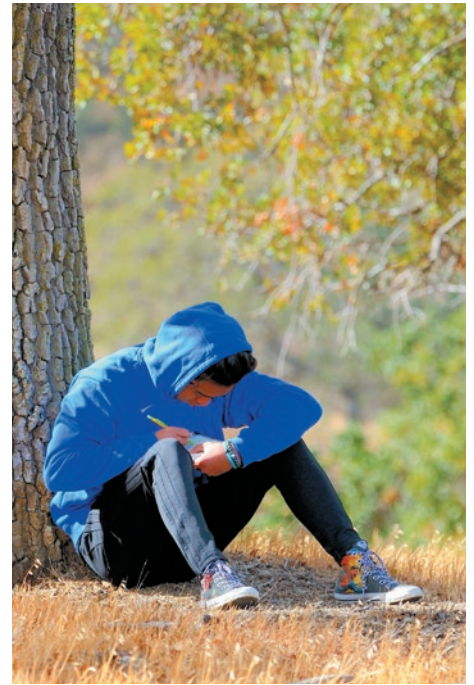


One of Save Mount Diablo's rock-climbing outings for the public, which we first offered last fall as part of our efforts to reach more communities

This past March, we opened our free public Mangini Ranch Educational Preserve—the first of its kind in Contra Costa County. Our educational preserve affords intimate, educational experiences in nature to one group at a time. It is open free of charge to a variety of groups pursuing educational purposes such as the following examples: a high school science class, an adult education nature photography course, a yoga class, a plein-air artists gathering, a college environmental studies class, a meditation class, a local hospital grief counseling support group, a homeowners association hiking club, a trail-running team, an elementary school field trip, an addiction recovery group, etc. Our educational preserve is run with an

online application and reservation system.

We have been doing all this increased education work to get more people connected to nature so that love of nature is further developed in them because we know love is the basis for good stewardship and having the will required to solve major environmental issues like the climate crisis and mass species extinction event. We also want to help address the documented disconnect from nature in our younger generations and build the bench for conservation long-term. We are honoring the past, our longstanding education tradition, and building upon it to inspire the future to take even better care of our beautiful natural world. 🌿



A Bigger Vision

By Seth Adams

Expanding our geographic focus from two peaks to seven counties

Save Mount Diablo is in one of the most important moments in its 50-year history. We've set a course to become an organization of statewide significance.

IF YOU PAY MUCH ATTENTION to Save Mount Diablo's communications, a new term has proliferated since 2019: "Diablo Range." In 2019 our Board of Directors more than doubled the geographic area within which Save Mount Diablo operates. Simultaneously we began popularizing the entire 200-mile mountain range. Now three years later, we have expanded again, quadrupling our geographic area to include the northern 150 miles of the 200-mile mountain range.

Here's part of the executive summary of our 2022-2023 Strategic Plan:

"It is increasingly important that we make sure Mount Diablo remains connected to the rest of its 200-mile Diablo Range stretching south across 12 counties, between Highway 101 and

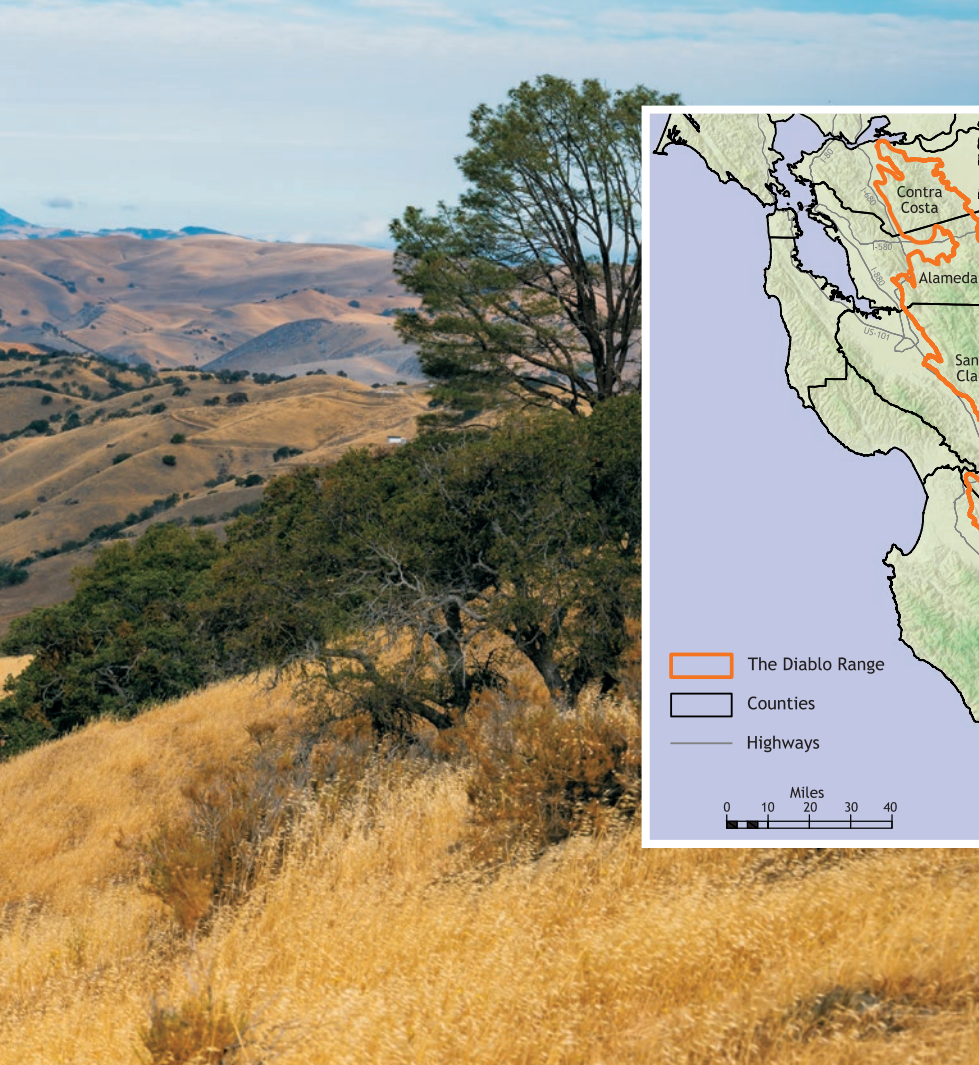
Highway 5. The Diablo Range includes more than 5,400 square miles of which only 24 percent is protected, the remainder threatened by increasing urbanization, fossil fuel and alternative energy development, wildfires, and climate change. For that reason, we have begun an expansion of our activities. While primarily focused on protecting the remaining important threatened open space properties north of Interstate 580, we've expanded our land acquisition activities south to Corral Hollow, will consider accepting land or easements as far south as the Alameda-Santa Clara County line, and will conduct related preservation and advocacy activities in the seven northern Diablo Range counties—Contra Costa, Alameda, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Stanislaus, Merced, and San Benito. We will continue

to popularize the entire 200-mile, 12-county Diablo Range, 'California's Next Big Conservation Story.'"

As part of the expansion, we considered our capacity—which is why we'll continue to focus acquisition and stewardship efforts near Mount Diablo—and did a gap analysis of areas not getting much attention. We'll continue to focus on partnerships and collaborations. We're budgeting funds for advocacy in each of the new counties. As more than one member of our Board noted about preserving and defending more of the Diablo Range, "If we don't do it, no one will."

Mount Diablo wasn't getting enough attention

In 1930 Mary Bowerman was assigned Mount Diablo as a botanical



Looking north from near Corral Hollow in Alameda County across the Diablo Range to Mount Diablo.



The Diablo Range—California's Next Great Conservation Story

Valley, and down the Tassajara Valley and Highland Ridge into the Tri-Valley area and to Altamont Pass. Because of a supportive public and generous donors, we were extraordinarily successful.

research project, her work centered on the wonderfully diverse main peaks. When she co-founded Save Mount Diablo in 1971, its first priorities came directly from Mary and her research—protect the main peaks and canyons. The assumption was that development would surround and isolate the “island mountain.” Over time it would come to resemble a botanical garden or a zoo. At the time, Mount Diablo State Park was 6,788 acres—10 square miles. The hope was that it would grow to 20,000 to 25,000 acres, the area covered by Mary’s original research, and the effort would end.

Save Mount Diablo’s well-meaning but naive founders hoped to be finished in five years, by the time of the 1976 Bicentennial. In that first five years, 2,000 acres were protected, mostly on the north side. Save Mount Diablo started raising funds to

purchase properties directly to speed up the process. After 17 years as an all-volunteer organization, in 1988 I was hired as Save Mount Diablo’s first staff person.

As nearby areas began being protected as city open spaces and regional parks, people like Bob Doyle, Bob Walker, Malcolm Sproul, and I began developing a bigger vision, often centered on recreation—connect the parks in big corridors and trails—but benefitting wildlife too. Save Mount Diablo began defining that bigger vision, naming those corridors, and convincing agencies to get on board. Often we’d defend the urban edges and slow down or stop bad development projects.

Step by step we expanded parks and Save Mount Diablo’s geographic area east of Morgan Territory and north of Marsh Creek Road to East County, all the way to the Central

By 2019 Mount Diablo was no longer an island

Instead it was covered in a network of protected areas. From 6,788 acres in 1971, Mount Diablo State Park had grown to 19,431 acres and was part of a system of 50 different parks and preserves north of Highway 580 and totaling more than 120,000 acres. In the East Bay, protected lands tripled to more than 30 percent of Contra Costa and Alameda counties.

For years we’d paid lip service to the idea that if Mount Diablo were cut off from the rest of the Diablo Range, it would lose many of its resources. I talked about connecting south to Del Valle Regional Park and Henry W. Coe State Park, but no one took it seriously.

Until they did. By 2012 we expanded our geographic area to include both sides of Altamont Pass. But we also began working further south to help protect Tesla Park in Corral Hollow,



Hikers in Henry W. Coe State Park, the largest state park in northern California, which is in Santa Clara County. Much of this expansive wilderness was burned in the 2020 wildfires.

part of that narrowest choke point of the northern Diablo Range.

In the time of climate change, big, diverse wildlife corridors like the Diablo Range will be increasingly important. When the 50,500-acre N3 Ranch was listed for sale, 50 percent larger than San Francisco and stretching through four counties, suddenly there was the potential to connect south to both Del Valle and Henry Coe in a single project. As mentioned, in 2019 we'd doubled our geographic area south to the Alameda–Santa Clara County line. This did not represent a dramatic increase in our work, we were simply focusing on a larger area.

Our Mary Bowerman Science and Research grants program already extended south to Pacheco Pass. Our March 2020 *Bay Nature* magazine supplement was the first publication and map about the entire Diablo Range. In August 2020, the 400,000-acre SCU fires provided another opportunity to focus public education, which we began that fall with our Diablo Range Revealed project. The Diablo Range really was starting to reveal its secrets—incredible biodiversity and fewer houses and less fragmentation than in wetter areas.

The Diablo Range expansion project has been very successful.

We helped stop the Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area's proposed off-road vehicle expansion and helped turn Tesla into a new 3,000-acre state park. We're involved in a defense of Del Puerto Canyon from a reservoir project. Our communications efforts have been impressive. We've led many hikes and tours. News articles and web sources related to the Diablo Range have dramatically increased.

In August 2021 the first California condor born in the wild in Pinnacles National Park flew through Altamont Pass to east of Mount Diablo: the first condor to reach Contra Costa County in more than 100 years. It was a powerful symbol of our conservation efforts and of the importance of the Diablo Range wildlife corridor.

We've heard from many donors and stakeholders about how this big-picture visionary project has inspired them. Our efforts to protect the Diablo Range are of statewide importance.

So in recent months we decided to take the next step, once again expanding geographic focus from the northern three of 12 Diablo Range counties, to include the northern seven of 12 Diablo Range counties.

Adding Stanislaus, Santa Clara, and Merced gets us to Henry W. Coe State Park and Pacheco Pass, through



Red-tailed hawks in the Peachtree Valley south of Pinnacles National Park.

gaps in other conservation efforts. The seventh county, San Benito, is a special opportunity. It includes the largest portion of the Diablo Range and its highest peak, San Benito Mountain, as well as Pinnacles National Park. San Benito County has a tiny population of 67,000 and just two incorporated towns, Hollister and San Juan Bautista. Affecting land use decisions there could be cost-effective and could lead to significant conservation gains.

Save Mount Diablo is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Three years from now? We'll consider adding the southern five Diablo Range counties to our geographic area. The next 50 years? While continuing to focus on the special areas near Mount Diablo, we'll also bring more attention to the Diablo Range. We've already started responding to several threatening projects further south. We'll make sure the Diablo Range is included in statewide planning efforts like 30x30, Governor Newsom's Executive Order in which California committed to the goal of conserving 30 percent of our lands and coastal waters by 2030. Step by step, Save Mount Diablo will help defend, expand, and connect the 24 percent of the Diablo Range that has already been protected. And you can help us "Save the Diablo Range." 🌿

“Making charitable gifts directly from my IRA is just a smart way to give. Doing so allows me to reduce my taxable income while supporting an organization I love at the same time.” JUDY ADLER

Have you considered making charitable gifts through your IRA?

IF YOU'RE 70½ YEARS or older, supporting Save Mount Diablo with a gift through your individual retirement account (IRA) may be a great way to give.

IRA gifts offer a variety of benefits for you and for the charities you support. Charitable distributions from your IRA are an easy way to give from your appreciated assets, and when these gifts are made directly from your IRA to a charity, the distribution is not included in your taxable income. This means you can avoid federal income tax that would otherwise be due on IRA withdrawals. Plus, any gifts you make directly from your IRA will be counted toward your annual required minimum distribution.

To qualify . . .

- You must be 70½ or older at the time you make your gift
- The transfer must go directly from your IRA to Save Mount Diablo to avoid income tax obligations
- Your total charitable giving from your IRA cannot exceed \$100,000 annually
- You cannot receive anything of value in return for your gift

Learn more at bit.ly/smdira. Or contact **Karen Ferriere** at kferriere@savemountdiablo.org or **925-407-7551**.

Because Save Mount Diablo may not offer legal or tax advice, we recommend that you work with qualified financial and legal advisors before making your gift.

Save Mount Diablo's Team Just Got Stronger



Queenie Li is our new Database Coordinator. Queenie originally joined the team as a Communications & Advocacy Intern in 2021, after graduating from UC Berkeley with a BS in environmental science and BA in sustainable environmental design, and joined our staff permanently in 2022. She has been passionate about environmental issues since she was a child and is excited to join the Save Mount Diablo team after having the natural beauty of Mount Diablo in the background her entire life. Queenie is an expert at creating origami and famous for identifying thousands of insects in a local stream as part of her undergraduate thesis work.

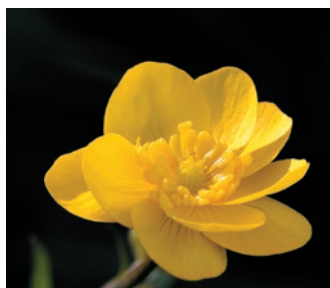


Samantha Kading is our new Assistant Development Director! She holds a BA from Middlebury College, where she studied English literature and Russian language, as well as a JD from the University of Wisconsin Law School, where she focused on environmental law, estate planning, and Native American law. She then served as a Skadden Fellow and offered community education and legal services to members of 11 Native American nations in urban and rural Wisconsin. Samantha grew up near Mount Diablo and credits its beautiful climb for turning her into an avid cyclist. She also loves to hike and spends as many nights as possible camping with her husband, three sons, and dog.

Tributes

TRIBUTE GIFTS and donations made in honor of or in memory of loved ones between July 1 and December 31, 2021 are listed below. Thank you to all of our supporters. Your generosity preserves, defends, and restores the mountain for all of us to enjoy!

Tribute names are indicated in bold. An asterisk (*) denotes donors who make monthly tribute gifts.



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We have made every effort to accurately spell names. If your name or donation has not been recorded correctly or was mistakenly omitted, we offer our apologies. Please contact us so that we can amend our records by sending an email to Queenie Li, Database Coordinator, at qli@savemountdiablo.org.



Save the Date **Saturday, September 10, 2022**
4:00–10:00 PM

Save Mount Diablo's Moonlight on the Mountain
50th Anniversary Gala Celebration

Join us to celebrate 50 years of conservation successes!
This event benefits our work to preserve, defend, and restore Diablo's wild lands. For more information, please visit bit.ly/SMD50th.



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TEL: 925-947-3535
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If you've already included Save Mount Diablo in your plans, please let us know so we can show our gratitude, welcome you to the Diablo Legacy Circle, and keep you up-to-date on Save Mount Diablo's work.

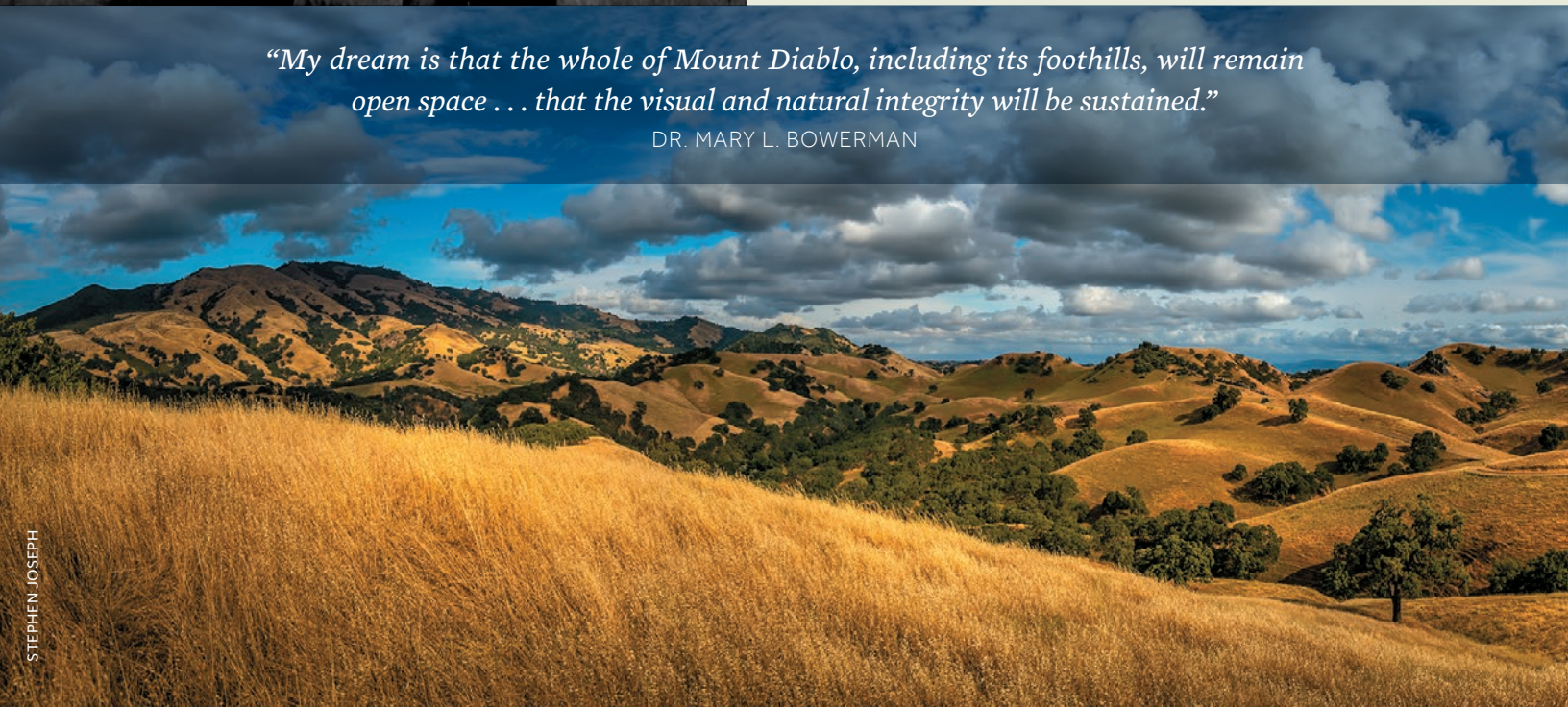
Contact Karen Ferriere for more information or to discuss your plans at kferriere@savemountdiablo.org or **925-407-7551**. Or visit bit.ly/plan-your-gift.

"My dream is that the whole of Mount Diablo, including its foothills, will remain open space . . . that the visual and natural integrity will be sustained."

DR. MARY L. BOWERMAN



SANDRA HOOVER AND SAUL BROMBERGER



STEPHEN JOSEPH